

R E P O R T R E S U M E S

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A SUMMER LANGUAGE ACTIVITY SCHOOL.
BY- WILKE, GERHARD M.
NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSN., WASHINGTON, D.C.

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ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL ACT FUNDS SUPPORTED A SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS, PUBLIC SCHOOLS' SUMMER ACTIVITY DESIGNED TO PROVIDE INTENSIVE LANGUAGE TRAINING IN FRENCH, GERMAN, AND SPANISH FOR 56 SELECTED STUDENTS. THE 6-HOUR DAILY SCHEDULE INCLUDED TWO HOURS DEVOTED TO ORAL EXPRESSION, TWO TO LITERATURE STUDY, AND TWO TO CULTURE-ORIENTED CREATIVE EXPRESSION AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES. THE USE OF THE LANGUAGE LABORATORY AND AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS WERE PLANNED EXTENSIONS OF THE CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES. NATIVE AIDES IN THE CLASSES SERVED AS SOURCES FOR CULTURAL ENRICHMENT AND ASSISTED THE STUDENTS, WHO SPOKE ONLY THE TARGET LANGUAGE AT ALL TIMES, WITH THEIR CONVERSATION AND WRITING. STUDENTS WERE ABLE TO COMPLETE A FULL YEAR'S ACADEMIC WORK, EITHER THE FIRST OR SECOND LEVEL, EXTENDED THEIR CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC OPPORTUNITIES, AND, MOST IMPORTANT, SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED THEIR ORAL FLUENCY AND WRITING ABILITY. THIS ARTICLE APPEARED IN "THE DFL BULLETIN," VOLUME 6, NUMBER 4, MAY 1967, PAGES 8-11. (AB)

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CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE

	Page
Reading in a Foreign Language	3
Language Camps in the United States	5
A Summer Language Activity School	8
The Native as an Aide in the Classroom	11

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FL 000 503

CAMPS (Cont.)

Whatever the groups sponsoring language camps may be, all can make a vital, much needed contribution to the advancement of language study.

There follows a list of directors or other persons to whom inquiries may be sent by those who are interested in participating in, or obtaining information about, the camps described above:

Arkansas:

Harrison High School Language Camp — Mrs. Virginia Nickels, Harrison High School, Harrison, Arkansas.

Idaho:

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Hanover College Spanish Camp — Mr. Robert Trimble, Hanover College, Hanover, Indiana.

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University of Kansas Spanish Camp — Mr. Ermal Garinger, Blake Annex, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas.

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Evangeline Parish Bi-lingual Summer Camp — Miss Audrey Babin-eaux, Assistant Supervisor of Modern Foreign Languages, State Department of Education, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Maine:

Les Chalets français (Deer Isle, Maine) — Mrs. Elsa N. James, 1024 Westview Ave., Philadelphia, Pa.
École Arcadie (Bar Harbor, Maine) — Dr. Richard T. Gott, École Arcadie, Bar Harbor, Maine.

Minnesota:

Concordia College Language Camps — Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota.

Minneapolis Public Schools Camps for children from culturally deprived areas — Mr. Jermaine D. Arendt, Consultant in Foreign Languages, Minneapolis Public Schools, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Oregon:

Camp Lingua — Camp Registrar, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, 4015 S.W. Canyon Rd., Portland, Oregon.

Vermont:

Ecole Champlain (Ferrisburg, Vermont) — Mr. and Mrs. Claude-Alain Schaetz, Ferrisburg, Vermont.

Wisconsin:

Waldland German Language Camp — Dr. Erhard M. Friedrichsmeyer, Department of German, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minn.

A SUMMER LANGUAGE ACTIVITY SCHOOL

by Gerhard M. Wilke

Springfield Public Schools
Springfield, Massachusetts

John Foster Dulles once said, "It is important that Americans should get more familiar with modern foreign languages. The United States today carries new responsibilities in many quarters of the globe, and we are at a serious disadvantage because of the difficulty of finding persons who can deal with the foreign language problem."

Theoretically, of course, our schools and colleges can provide the depth of foreign language called for by the late Secretary of State. Practically, however, even nine years after the passage of NDEA, students enrolled in even a third or fourth year of high school modern language make up a small minority of the total who begin language study. In addition to the simple lack of time in a two-year course it is probably the hothouse atmosphere of the traditional classroom that often stymies rapid progress by the learner. Language is meant to be a part of life. It thrives when associated with meaningful experience and is relatively meaningless when trapped between the pages of a textbook.

With the advent of the Elementary and Secondary School Act of 1965 and its particular interest in fostering exemplary instructional programs, we in Springfield began to develop guidelines for a summer activity program that would provide intensive language instruction plus the invigorating contact with native speakers of foreign languages and their cultures. Our project design was funded by ESEA for summer 1966.

In selecting staff we carefully sought out teachers with a high degree of competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing skills plus unusual knowledge of applied linguistics, culture and civilization and foreign language teaching methods and techniques. In addition, one native speaker was assigned to each teacher as an aide.

Students were able to qualify for the program if they had completed two levels of the target language or the

equivalent. Originally, it was intended that they be selected on the basis of ability and promise using the LA and LB forms of the MLA Cooperative Foreign Languages Tests as a measuring instrument. Recommendations from language teachers, guidance counselors, and principals were required.

In practice this first year, we had to forego using the tests for selection because it was too late from a practical point of view to administer them. We had to rely entirely on the recommendations from language teachers, guidance counselors, and principals.

In another year I would urge others to try to bring any and all qualified students together in a central location or locations and administer either the LA or LB form of the MLA Cooperative Foreign Language Tests. This will help eliminate misunderstandings that otherwise might arise. Directions, for example, given to teachers, counselors, and principals are easily misinterpreted, and often lead to misunderstandings.

The tests would prove invaluable, therefore, as a basis for selection. They should, however, not be the only criteria for the selection of students.

Originally we selected about 10% of the Springfield school population who had completed the equivalent of two levels of foreign language study. That means we selected approximately 75 French students, 30 Spanish students, and 15 German students to participate in the six-week summer immersion program.

For various reasons, such as previously made summer plans, work, vacation, lateness of notification, only 73 enrolled by the end of June, 1966.

Of this number, 55 enrolled in the French section, 10 in the Spanish, and 8 in the German.

When we started school on July 5, 1966, we found 56 in attendance. Most of the others called or gave reasons in writing why they were not going to attend. Reasons included lack of trans-

FL 000 503

portation, change in summer plans, the opportunity to work during the summer, and illness.

Those who stayed in attendance had an attendance record of 93.2%.

In view of the foregoing, I feel that in the future the program should be offered to students in the greater Springfield area, inviting the academically talented from all the neighboring communities who are on connecting bus lines to Springfield.

Furthermore, in view of the success in French, German, and Spanish, I have recommended expansion to other languages which are now being taught in the region. These languages could include Italian, Russian, and Hebrew.

By so doing we would attract more talented students, and we would be assured of having a sufficient number from which to select.

On July 5, 1966, we embarked on our summer school in French, Spanish, and German. The program ran six hours a day for six 5-day weeks. We felt that there was a definite need for this amount of exposure time in the language because, after studying a foreign language for two years at the high school level, the student had actually only studied the language for the equivalent of 42 six-hour days. This calculation is based on 42-minute class periods, meeting 5 times a week for 180 days.

During the first day of classes, we administered form MA of the MLA Co-operative Foreign Language Tests in German, French, and Spanish. During the last day of the project, we administered form MB and the MLA Co-operative Foreign Language Tests.

Our students for the most part felt that the beginning test (the MA form) was quite difficult and almost discouraging. The second form MB, when administered at the end of our summer session, proved to be much easier. These student reactions are mentioned only to indicate that considerable progress was made during the six weeks.

Since we were unable, for practical reasons, to administer qualifying tests this year, pupils were recommended and enrolled who had not had the required equivalent of two levels of language study. This, however, gave us a chance to explore the possibility of an immersion program at two levels. By this chance misinterpretation of a directive, we had some students enrolled who had no prior language experience. With these talented youngsters we were able to complete a full year's work, or more specifically, the equivalent of the first level of Spanish. In addition these youngsters gained a command of the

language and were exposed to Spanish culture and literature.

Then, too, we had a few students who had the equivalent of only one level of instruction. This provided us with the opportunity of demonstrating what we could do with teaching level two in an immersion program. As expected the able youngsters were able to complete the second level of the work, showing gains in fluency and understanding. They all participated in our extracurricular afternoon cultural activities and made phenomenal progress.

Although we had no bells during our summer language program, we devoted at least two hours to oral expression, divided into shorter segments of approximately 40 minutes. Each segment was concerned with a different aspect of language learning. We had pronunciation drills, pattern or structural drills, dramatization of dialogues or role playing, and we used the language laboratory for reinforcement and evaluative work.

Two hours, divided into 40-minute periods, were devoted to the study of literature. The literary selections were in the third level textbook in the Holt series.

One hour was devoted to creative expression. Projects were prepared for such holidays as July 14, August 1, and a Spanish Fiesta. July 14th is French Bastille Day and August 1st is the Swiss National holiday. Folk dancing and folk songs and games were part of the program of physical activity. In other words, these activities were tied in with the culture of the target language.

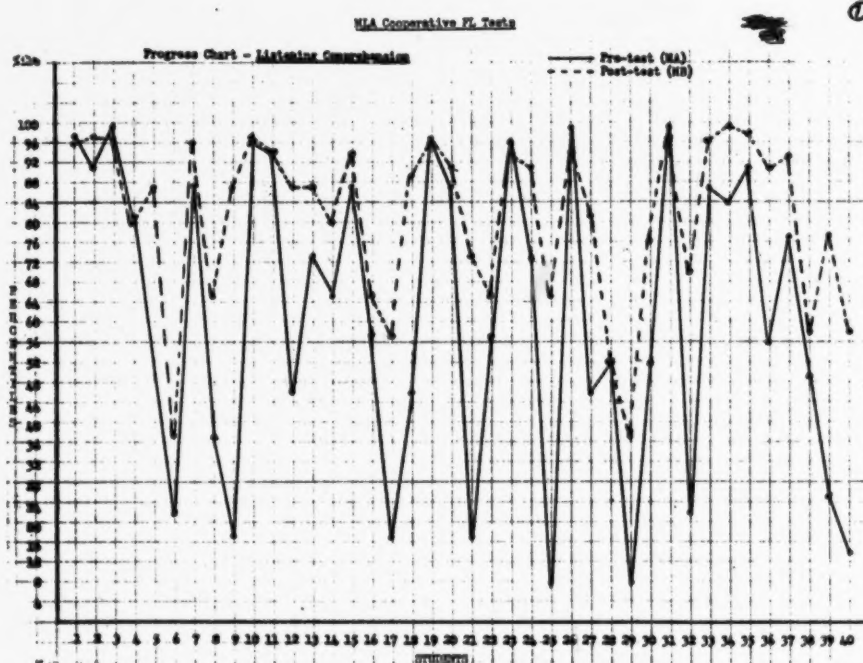
Typical Daily Schedule

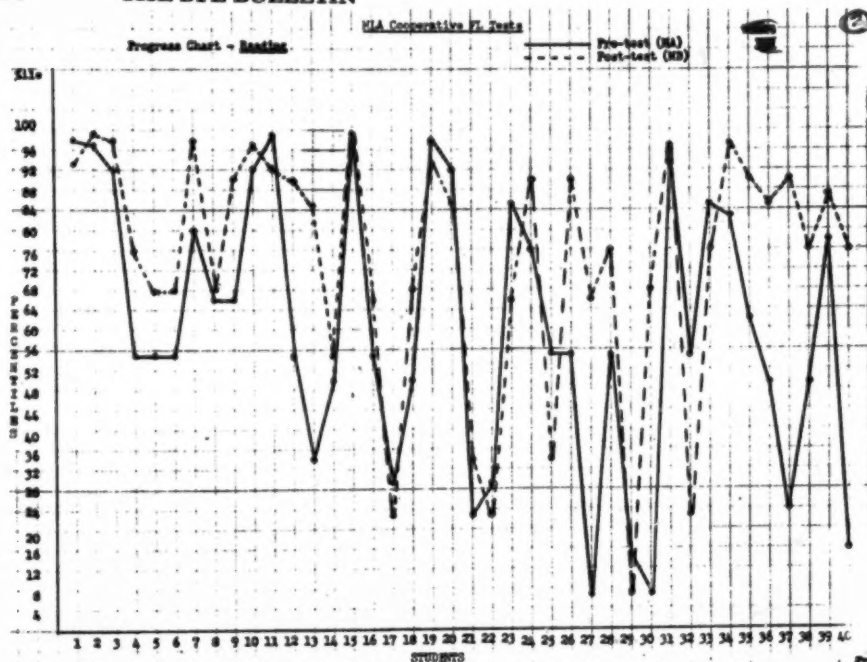
8:00- 8:40 Oral Practice

8:40- 9:20	Literature (reading)
9:20-10:00	Pattern or structural drills
10:40-11:20	Aural comprehension
11:20-12:00	Literature (composition)
12:00-12:30	Supervised lunch
12:30- 1:15	Culture Song Festival Dramatization Demonstration Film Lecture
1:15- 2:00	Recreation or creative expression Dancing Singing

Originally, it was proposed to limit the classes to 15 pupils per teacher. In practice, each teacher had less than 10, and results were rewarding. During the first week of classes, there were difficult periods of adjustment. After the teachers realized that the youngsters were being thrown into a completely new environment, they began to get an insight into the problem.

Oral fluency, of course, increased rapidly after the second week, and all teachers and native teacher aids were amazed. Listening comprehension and reading increased moderately, whereas great progress was shown in writing ability. It is interesting to note that none of the teachers stressed the writing phase of language study during the summer session. Since teachers did not emphasize writing, the extraordinary progress made by the participants must be attributed in some way to the other phases of language study.





The graphs which are a part of the report show the progress made by forty of the participants, who had all completed two levels of the target language before attending the summer session.

The purpose of this language school was to expose completely for six hours each day, qualified and selected students to the target language. The target language was required to be spoken, not only in class, but at lunch, and at all other times during the day. In this way, we reinforced and maintained skills acquired previously and provided extended cultural and linguistic opportunities with well-designed language activities.

During classes in the morning, the native aides answered queries concerning culture and civilization, explained nuances and word derivations, gave talks on different aspects of culture, history, and civilization, and explained common foreign expressions and slang. They also corrected tests and quizzes.

The aides also helped in the language laboratory, corrected student responses, and worked with individual students on intonation, pronunciation, liaison, grammar, and writing.

At lunch they helped develop conversation, and presided at one of the language tables.

After lunch the aides showed slides of their country, taught folk songs and games, organized and directed plays or skits, conducted oral practice sessions, including oral reading, conducted panel discussions and debates, and in general increased the pupils' confidence by showing that they could understand a native.

The native teacher aides were rotated from class to class for variety, where they discussed similarities and differ-

ences in cultures in order to promote international understanding.

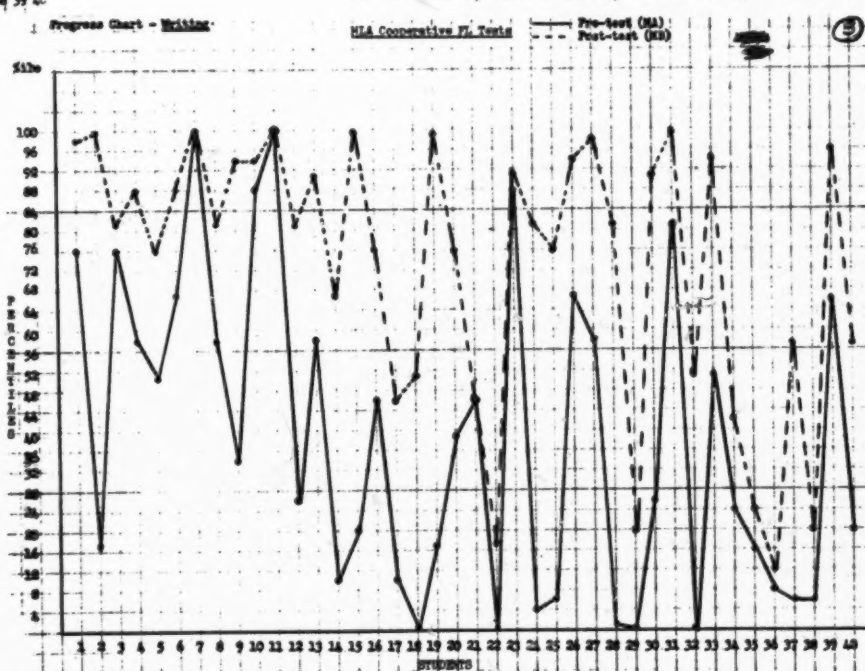
Originally, we wanted to employ a full-time laboratory assistant. This type of person is needed, but in our particular set-up we had to employ a number of part-time laboratory technicians in order to maintain and service the laboratory. In addition they arranged laboratory schedules, assisted in the preparation and duplication of tapes, erased and repaired tapes, and made tapes available for each student.

The language laboratory was used as an integral part of the language program. The work in the classroom was completely integrated with the work in the laboratory.

"Foreign language training is bound to promote international good will and understanding, benefit United States objectives, and be a source of great enjoyment and satisfaction to the individuals themselves who participate," according to Christian Herter, former Secretary of State.

In our program we attempted to make our pupils bilingual, and in a very real sense we felt we were helping our nation overcome the shortage of young people fluent in foreign language.

There is no doubt that we promoted international good will because the teacher aides were such a wonderful expression of the foreign culture. The films were also a contributing factor. Then, too, we invited visiting students from France to join us for lunch and share the afternoon cultural activities with us. This led to a spontaneous request for a dance which also had an international flavor. Our own German, French, and Spanish students, of course, attended, and they invited



the students visiting from France as well as our students who had just returned from France on a study-home-stay visit.

From the comments that were made by the students in response to a questionnaire, we were able to determine that the program was enjoyed by all. It must have been a source of great enjoyment and satisfaction because of the excellent attendance despite the hot, humid summer weather.

The lunchroom facilities were utilized for a noon lunch program, during which period the students were assigned to tables on a rotating basis supervised by teachers or teacher aides. This luncheon was another teaching situation, and the target language was required to be spoken during the meal.

Since the lunch program is really part of the basic program I believe it should be incorporated in the project and be available gratis to students and teachers. Collecting funds for meals becomes just another administrative chore which could otherwise be

avoided. It was also difficult or impossible to require youngsters to buy their meals, and, consequently, they did not always participate wholeheartedly in this phase of our program.

We bought the third level texts in the Holt series for the French, German, and Spanish sections. According to the answers to questionnaires, every pupil and teacher as well as teacher aide loved the texts. Each classroom was equipped with an overhead projector, a stereo tape recorder, a filmstrip projector, and recording tapes to accompany the textbooks.

We ordered French newspapers from Canada, and German and Spanish newspapers from New York. These were used daily in each language classroom. We provided one newspaper for each individual classroom. For the future, I would recommend budgeting a few dollars more for this item in order to order newspapers from abroad and receive them by air. These, however, must be ordered far in advance to be received in time for our program.

We ordered commercial tapes and filmstrips to accompany our texts. The tapes and filmstrips were a huge success judging by the response of the students.

Each student was supplied with a blank recording tape so that he could use the tape in the laboratory, record the master program as well as his responses, and benefit by the corrections of the teacher. Thereupon, he was urged to evaluate his own performance by comparing it with the master program. The teacher was also able to evaluate the student's performance.

We invited consultant linguists to meet with teachers once each week in order to help make the teachers more effective. They kept the teachers informed on the latest advanced techniques and methods in the field of linguistics. The linguists visited classes once a week to see that approaches were being utilized effectively. On the day of visitation, a conference was held with all teachers, and ideas for improvement of the program were discussed. The linguist, as an outsider, was able to get the teachers to try to look at themselves objectively.

The consultant for testing supervised the pre-testing and the post-testing and interpreted the results.

In summation, I would certainly recommend that such a program as this be undertaken whenever possible. Every pupil in attendance and every teacher considered the program invaluable. Parents called and expressed their appreciation. They realized that Springfield was fortunate to have such a unique program.